

Mexico and the Chip on Her Shoulder

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OF THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT STAFF

approaches. Carranza has said that he will not again seek the presidency. But what Carranza does seek is a condition that would necessitate the calling off of the elections, with, of course, his retention of office. In that territory which he controls he is virtually dictator, by reason of an army maintained for the most part through taxation of the foreign investments which have sought to develop the country. His belief, too, that the continued baiting of the gringo government to the north will effect a solidarity among the Mexicans, in the event of the approach of a real crisis, is responsible in part for his tactics.

In the case of Jenkins, the American consul at Puebla, the American note dispatched to the Carranza Government read that this government was "surprised and incensed" to learn that the consul had been arrested, and his release was demanded immediately. No answer was forthcoming for a week, and then came the flat refusal. This refusal, it is known, stirred the temper of the Cabinet as had no previous defiance of Carranza. It was announced that the American Government would not recede from the position previously taken, and the early days of December seemed likely to bring an ultimatum, a step leading to actual hostilities, providing, of course, the Mexican Government refused to acquiesce in the demands of Washington.

The tragic part of it all is that intervention means a war not unlike that which harassed the British in South Africa. It would not be war of any magnitude;

with Mexico is possible as long as Carranza is president has been dissipated. It is felt that every effort to conciliate him that can be made has gone forth. His truculence, it is believed, can no longer be ignored. And with that there is the sentiment that the very welfare of Mexico itself depends on decisive action by this country. Mexico is exhausting herself in the struggles that go on. There is no stability and a stabilizing influence is needed. Intervention may come as a result of the Jenkins affair; again, it may be withheld for a time; that it is inevitable, barring the unforeseen "about face" of the Mexican Government, appears to be the existing sentiment in Washington.

The opinions of Mexicans coming out of Washington, and those of Americans coming out of Mexico City, form a striking contrast. Mexicans coming out of Washington are convinced that a determined, persistent, continuous effort is being made to induce in the American public a frame of mind which will permit intervention as a necessity; while Americans coming out of Mexico City are equally convinced that nothing could more misrepresent our true national character, or more tragically fail to meet the real requirements of the situation. Thus the state of mind carried back into Mexico is one of alarm, which inevitably influences Mexican public opinion as it relates to us, even going so far as to permeate the bandit bands of the north; while the state of mind carried back into the United States is one of warning against a contemplated step which, though materially successful, could hardly fail to be morally wrong.

The result, therefore, is this: in Mexico they have

but one view of the matter—the threatening attitude of the United States, the increasing success of the money power in getting the intervention idea into the minds of the American people. While in the United States, we have two views: those of interventionists whose principal interest in Mexico must be stated in terms of investments, and those of non-interventionists whose interest is not only in the welfare of Mexico but also in the moral honor and consistency of the United States. They clearly see that intervention would be as fatal a violation of the pledges of President Wilson, as the intervention of any European government would be a fatal breach of the Monroe Doctrine.

Between these two points of view the matter is still suspended, with interventionists making measurable headway into the wearied public mind.

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ANDREW CACRIA

He has recently been dismissed by the Carranza Government because he remained seated at a banquet where Governor Hobby of Texas urged intervention in Mexico.

TRAGEDY is in the making. American lives are to be sacrificed that the lives of Americans may be safe. The United States is drifting, more rapidly today than ever before, toward intervention in Mexico. The American Government has decreed that conditions in the neighbor country to the south have become so intolerable that they must be remedied. The history of Mexico for the past five years has been such that many believe here that the only remedies possible are intervention and pacification.

The one Mexican of prominence who had an understanding of this country and its people is dead—shot down by a firing squad. He was Felipe Angeles, world-famed artillery expert, chevalier of the Legion of Honor, and a firm believer in America and American ideals. He died denouncing his countrymen for their hatred of the American people, and tried to shame them into an understanding that this country seeks nothing more than that the lives and property rights of Americans remain unviolated.

A week's calm followed by new outrages—this is the chronology of the "Mexican situation" for years. American property is seized; Americans are held for ransom; American officers and soldiers are fired upon—are killed in cold blood; inquiries show that followers of the so-called government that rules the country in many cases are responsible. Requests are made that the guilty be punished—the guilty go unpunished, to commit new crimes. Demands that Americans unjustly imprisoned shall be freed are met with sneers. An accounting, long delayed, is coming.

At the time this was written, the government in Washington had in its possession reports showing that twenty-two American citizens had been murdered in Mexico in five months. Added to this was the imprisonment of the American consul, Jenkins, at Puebla, and the refusal of the Mexican Government to release the consular officer; American planes, lost in the air, had been fired upon when they appeared over Mexican soil; American property had been seized; Americans had been held for ransom, ransom that the American Government was compelled to pay to effect the release of men wearing the uniform of the Army of the United States.

Through all the dealings with the Mexican Government has run a note of insolence on the part of Carranza in his dealings with our State Department. At no time has there been any attempt to adopt a conciliatory attitude. In fact, with each step in the various diplomatic interchanges that have taken place, the answer of the Carranza Government to our representations has become more defiant. Also, the motive for such defiance has become quite clear.

From the reports at hand it is learned that Mexico today is as sorely beset by revolutionaries as at any time since the passing of Diaz. The authority of the Carranza Government is limited; a national election



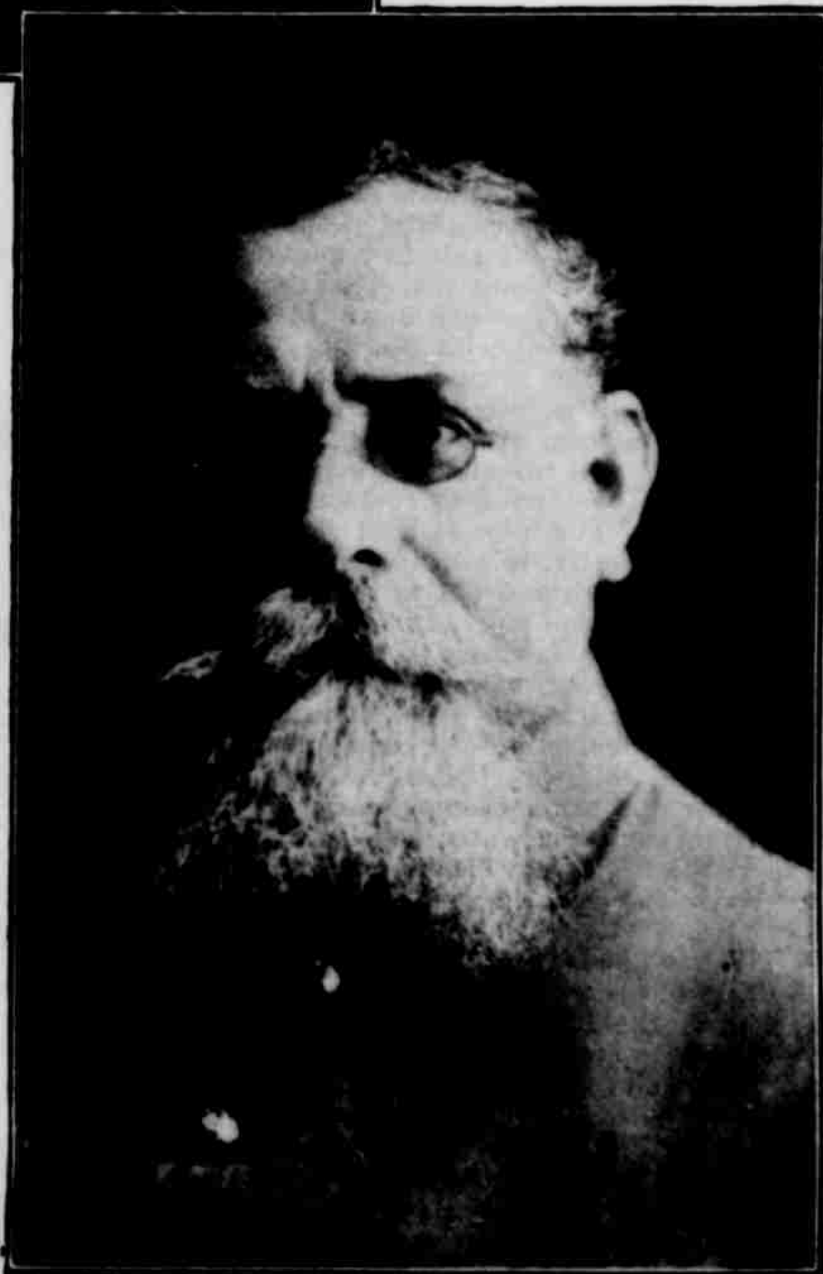
A typical scene on a Mexican railway when troops are moving. Many of the men take their families along with them and the camp followers are frequently as numerous as the army.

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the effective resistance of the Mexican army would amount to little. But intervention means pacification, and pacification means the policing of Mexico for years. Army officers realize that intervention in Mexico means combating guerilla hostilities than which there is nothing so irksome to an occupying force.

But the United States Army today, existing and potential, is a far different organization from the one existing when Pershing entered Mexico to capture Francisco Villa, "dead or alive." The eyes of the army then were a half-dozen planes which broke up under the strain to which they were put. It was during this hunt of Villa that motor transport was used for the first time. Today the preparedness of the American forces is such that adequate resistance by Mexico simply would be impossible. But a guerilla warfare in the fastnesses of the mountains, and in the desert, could be maintained for many months, in the opinion of military observers, by isolated detachments which, with knowledge of the country and the friendship of their own people, would be most irritating to the American troops. And that, it is accepted, would be the result of intervention.

But the attitude of the Mexican Government inevitably is leading to just the situation pictured. The investments of the nationals of this and other countries are given little, if any, protection from the roving bands of marauders that make the country unsafe. Those who are guarding the properties face death in carrying out their orders. Scores have been killed and there has been no redress. A study of the situation seems to have convinced all that peace in Mexico cannot come through her own exertions. There is the growing feeling that the patience of other nations must soon be exhausted if conditions are to continue as they have. The one strong man, who believed in this country, and sought to end the differences among the factions of his country that peace and prosperity might return to the stricken land, has been executed, and in his death a new bitterness has sprung up in Mexico, which can be followed only by new bloodshed. Any belief that may have existed that a new deal



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PRESIDENT CARRANZA OF MEXICO

His government has brought on a grave situation which has produced a strong sentiment in Washington for intervention. The man himself has been variously described. By those who desire that Mexico should work out her problems and find by her own efforts her place among the nations, Carranza is described as a statesman of great ability and constructive purpose. Those whose desire for intervention is overpowering, regard him as our enemy.